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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION AUTHORIZES VERIZON TO PROVIDE LONG DISTANCE SERVICE IN RHODE ISLAND

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) today voted unanimously to approve Verizon's application to provide in-region, interLATA service originating in Rhode Island. Approval of Verizon's application promises substantial benefits for the states' consumers in the form of enhanced competition in both the local and long distance markets.

Competing carriers serve approximately 119,000 lines in Rhode Island, or 16% of the total access lines in the state. Competitors serve approximately 94,000 lines using unbundled network elements or their own facilities, and approximately 25,000 lines through resale. Almost 38% of competitors' lines are residential.

With the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Congress envisioned fundamental, pro-competitive changes in the telecommunications markets by making a Bell Operating Company's (BOC) entry into the long distance market subject to the BOC first opening its local service monopoly to competition. A BOC satisfies this contingency by demonstrating compliance with section 271 of the 1996 Act. After a BOC files a section 271 long distance application with the FCC, the Commission has 90 days to determine whether a BOC has taken the statutorily required steps to open its local telecommunications markets to competition, including compliance with the 1996 Act's section 271 14-point "competitive checklist."

Since the passage of the 1996 Act, the FCC has denied five long distance applications, and now has approved applications to provide in-region, long distance service in 10 states. Additionally, four applications have been withdrawn. A summary of all section 271 applications can be accessed at the following FCC web page:
www.fcc.gov/Bureaus/Common_Carrier/in-region_applications/

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The Commission emphasizes that Verizon must continue to comply with the section 271 checklist requirements, and the Commission has a number of enforcement tools at its disposal, including imposing penalties or suspension of approval.

-FCC-

Docket No.: CC 01-324

Action by the Commission February 22, 2002, by Report and Order (FCC 02-63). Chairman Powell and Commissioner Abernathy; Commissioner Copps concurring and issuing a statement; and Commissioner Martin approving in part, concurring in part, and issuing a statement.

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News about the Federal Communications Commission can also be found on the Commission's web site www.fcc.gov.